PLYMOUTH
1824

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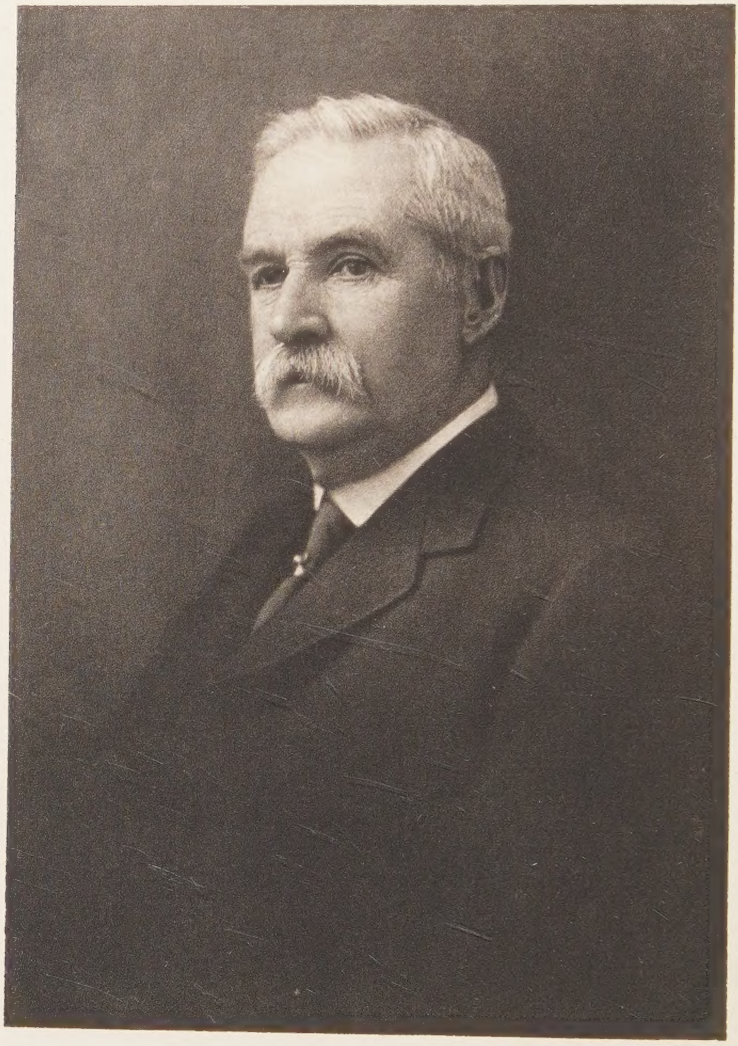
GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

BY THE PLYMOUTH CORDAGE COMPANY IN
HONOR OF GIDEON FRANCIS HOLMES
PLYMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS
MARCH TWENTY-SEVENTH
NINETEEN HUNDRED
AND NINE

PRINTED BY THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

FOREWORD

FOREWORD

THE history of the PLYMOUTH CORDAGE COMPANY is a continuous story of great accomplishments and of wonderful growth from small beginnings. Its organization in 1824 was a small affair, or at least would so be counted to-day, but the event has been made notable by its notable results.

Likewise, incidents have occurred in its career which at their happening seemed hardly of sufficient importance to excite even passing remark, but which have been made remarkable by their consequences. On March 28, 1859, one such incident occurred — the Company engaged a new office boy — surely nothing remarkable in the regular course of business. But because that small fifteen-year old chanced to be Gideon F. Holmes, there was held on March 28 of the present year a unique celebration to mark an occasion which itself, we believe, is unique in the industrial annals of our country. The office boy, who fifty years ago

to-day began his duties under the eye of the Company's founder, Bourne Spooner, rose to the highest executive position in the organization, and for twenty-seven years has been its guiding power and moving spirit.

So it was no more than fitting that upon this golden anniversary day officers, stockholders, and employees, with other business and personal associates, should unite in offering their congratulations to Mr. Holmes and in wishing him many more long and successful years.

The principal feature of the day's celebration took the form of a banquet held in the Company's newly constructed number three mill, the entire upper floor being given over to the purpose.

Nearly two thousand people sat down at the well-laden tables, and after the repast followed the most impressive and interesting part of the day's exercises. Straight from the hearts of the speakers came the tributes of honor and affection to Mr. Holmes, and they were echoed from the responsive hearts of all the audience.

The peculiar interest which the occasion held for all present and the indications that it was of interest to many friends, business and personal,

PRESIDENT LORING

MR. HOLMES IN HIS AUTOMOBILE

MR. HOLMES' PRIVATE OFFICE

who could not attend have led to the preservation in the following pages of the messages there delivered.

That our celebration and what it stood for were matters of more than private or local interest is indicated by the attention received from the press. An editorial in the *Outlook* of April 17, 1909, presents a broad view of the spirit and significance of the event.

CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	7
"Well Done!"	17
After Dinner Program	23
Address of The Hon. George G. Crocker	29
Address of Mr. Richard McLean	37
Address of Mr. William Lowell Putnam	41
Address of Mr. Gideon Francis Holmes	45
Address of Mr. B. Preston Clark	55
Address of Mr. Edmond J. Lindsay	63
Address of Major Thomas S. Hobbs	71
Address of The Hon. William M. German, M.P.	81
Address of The Reverend W. W. Dornan, D.D.	87
A Fifty-Strand Lay (E. D. Ver Planck)	97
"Lines" (W. K. Heath)	103
Committees	107
Sketch of the Life of Gideon Francis Holmes	113

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Gideon Francis Holmes . . . . . *Frontispiece*
(Photogravure)

President Loring, Mr. Holmes, and Mr. Holmes' Private Office . . . . . *Facing page* 8

Early Views 18

Plymouth Cordage Company in the United States and in Canada 30

Visitors Alighting from Special Train — Anniversary Celebration 46

Scenes at the Banquet 56

Serving-Women, the Band, and Waiters at the Banquet . 64

Employees' Library — Loring Reading-Room 74

Three Views of Number 3 Mill 88

Spinning and Rope Making Machines 98

Scenes at the Banquet 108

Gideon Francis Holmes 113
(Reproduction from oil-painting by Gaugengigl)

Three Early Pictures and Birthplace of Mr. Holmes . . 120

A Group of Labor Day Show Pictures 126

Mill Number 3 132

Harris Hall — Office Building 140

Ball Field and Tower of Mill Number 1 146

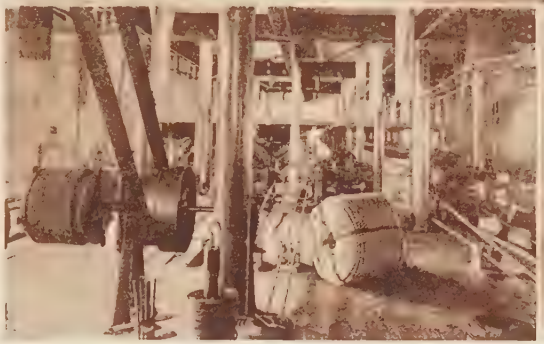
"WELL DONE!"

Editorial Printed in "The Outlook,"
for 17 April, 1909

WELL DONE!

ON March 28 a boy of fifteen, named Holmes, entered a rope factory as an office boy. He swept the office, ran errands, and helped in hauling rope to the scales and tagging it. That was fifty years ago. Last month, on the 27th, the Plymouth Cordage Company set a holiday and made a feast. It gathered together — employees, stockholders, directors — and, with some five hundred guests, it held a jubilee. In the huge hall on the upper floor of one of its factory buildings it collected nearly two thousand people, over fourteen hundred of them workers in the factory with brain and hand, and set them down to tables spread with good things to eat. At one of the great unoccupied stretches in this hall there was a band of musicians — all of them connected with the company; and their martial music and tuneful airs resounded from the distance. This big commercial organization was honoring Gideon Francis Holmes because he had given fifty years of good and faithful service to humanity. The

men who spoke at the end of the banquet praised him for his ambition, for his efficiency, for his success in rising to the place of treasurer and manager, and for his value to the Company; but it was perfectly clear that they were thinking all the time of the man as a servant of his fellowmen. Among the speakers was an old man, bent, white-haired; as spokesman of the employees he presented to Mr. Holmes a loving cup and a gold-headed cane. And as he spoke seven other aged men rose and stood. These eight had all been in the Company's employ when that office boy began his tasks, and they were still on the roll of the Company's employees. When a portrait of Mr. Holmes was unveiled, there was cheering; as there was when Mr. Holmes himself spoke, or rather read, simply his words of reminiscence. In the evening, after the guests had visited the works, there was a time of social gathering with dancing in the great hall. As Mr. and Mrs. Holmes led the "grand march," followed by directors of the company and their wives and employees and their wives, the observer could hardly have helped meditating on the change in industrial conditions that had come to pass during that one



WORKS IN FIRST HALF OF 19TH CENTURY — HAND HACKLING

VIEW IN ROPEWALK — HAND SPINNING

man's career. Once the employees were people of New England; now they are — what? The library, which is as much a part of the plant as the "ropewalk," contains books in Italian, German, French, Portuguese, Polish, and Russian. The days have long gone by when the intimate relation of master and apprentice can characterize industry. Those days cannot be restored. Steel machinery has brought into existence the organization of human machinery. Can that human machinery remain human? That is the question which many people looking on the conditions of to-day answer in the negative. There at North Plymouth, however, was an answer of another kind. The library, the woods within the factory grounds, the pleasant cottages, the bathing beach, the athletic grounds, the great hall, and such a social gathering, are something more than the investment that a wise dairyman makes in good stables. They are symbols of that fellowship in industry which can be restored, and, perhaps sooner than we think, be made truer and sounder because broader and more far-reaching than it ever was in the days of the hand worker. The man under whose direction and management a com-

pany has been able to seize upon and harness this spirit of fellowship in work has served the world well. His fifty years of service are as worthy of celebration as the fifty-year service of a minister or doctor or judge. Mr. Holmes and his colleagues have proved that the manufacturer or merchant, as well as the minister or doctor or judge, can magnify his office.

AFTER-DINNER PROGRAM

ORDER OF EXERCISES

2 P.M.	DINNER AND ADDRESSES
4.30 to 6 P.M. . . .	INSPECTION OF PLANT
7 to 11 P.M.	RECEPTION, MUSIC AND DANCING

AFTER-DINNER PROGRAM

MR. AUGUSTUS P. LORING

PRESIDENT OF THE COMPANY, PRESIDING

Song, "America" By the whole Assembly

My country, 't is of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the Pilgrim's pride,
From every mountain-side
Let freedom ring.

Let music swell the breeze,
And ring from all the trees
Sweet freedom's song;
Let mortal tongues awake,
Let all that breathe partake,
Let rocks their silence break,
The sound prolong.

Our fathers' God, to Thee,
Author of liberty,
To thee we sing.
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King!

SAMUEL F. SMITH

Address — The Hon. George G. Crocker

Presentation to Mr. Holmes in behalf of the Employees — Mr. Richard McLean

Presentation to Mr. Holmes in behalf of the Stockholders — Mr. William L. Putnam

Acceptance — By Mr. Holmes

Addresses

Mr. E. J. Lindsay, of Milwaukee

Mr. T. S. Hobbs, of Toronto

The Hon. W. M. German, M.P., of Welland, Canada

Rev. W. W. Dornan, of Plymouth

Original Poem, "A Fifty-Strand Lay," By E. D. Ver Planck — Read by the Author

Original Poem, "Lines," by W. K. Heath — Read by Mr. Crocker

Song, "Auld Lang Syne" — By the whole Assembly

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We 'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

And here 's a hand, my trusty frien',
And gie 's a hand o' thine,
We 'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We 'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

ROBERT BURNS

ADDRESS OF
THE HON. GEORGE G. CROCKER

Mr. Augustus P. Loring, *President of the Company and Chairman of the Celebration, introducing the Hon. George G. Crocker, said:*

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This celebration, as you all know, is to commemorate fifty years of faithful service.

The stockholders of the Plymouth Cordage Company are here to congratulate Mr. Holmes, not only because he has managed their affairs well, but also because he has always carried their standard high.

We who serve the Company are here because we appreciate that under his leadership that service has always been dignified and pleasant.

All you gentlemen who have come from every part of the United States and Canada are here to show your high regard for him as a merchant and a man. And we are all here because we love him. (*Applause.*)

The stockholders desired that Mr. Holmes should not be the only person who should have a lasting memorial of this day, and the directors have therefore had one prepared which we now propose to show you. Two of the present directors, Mr. Bartlett and Mr. Crocker, were members of the board which selected Mr. Holmes as manager in 1882. Mr. Bartlett is detained at the sick bed of a daughter — our sympathy is with him — but our senior director is with us, looking not much older in years, but perhaps older in wisdom, though he was wise enough twenty-seven years ago to pick out Mr. Holmes. He himself has not yet completed his fifty years of invaluable service and devotion to the Company, but he is getting there.

I present to you one whom we all delight to honor — the Hon. George G. Crocker.

ADDRESS OF
THE HON. GEORGE G. CROCKER

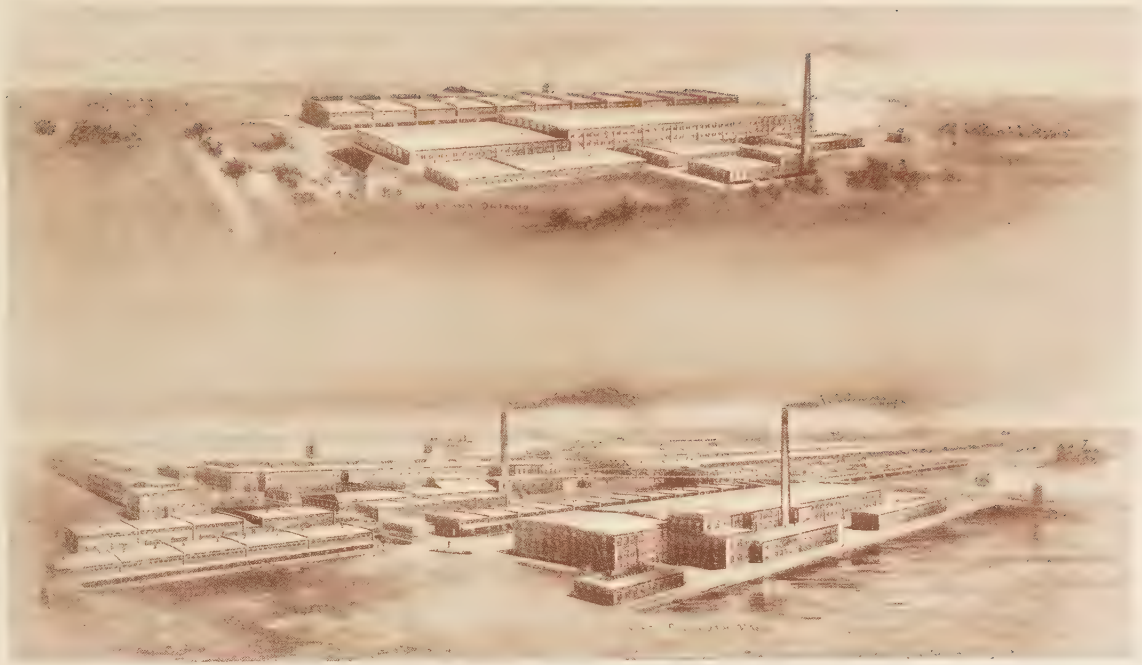
THE happy occasion for our meeting to-day is most unusual. We are glad that we are here to honor Mr. Holmes, and he is glad that he is here. We are glad that he is glad, and he is glad that we are glad.

Mr. Holmes started at what is generally known as the foot of the ladder. Perhaps an equally good simile would be the foot of a steep cliff on which there are occasional ledges or shelves or plateaux.

The cliff is very forbidding to the people standing at its foot and gazing up at its steep and difficult sides. Many are discouraged by the very aspect of it and look around to find somebody to give them a boost. Woe unto them if, having been boosted up to a halting place, they come to the conclusion that for them this is the only way to success. They may get another boost, or even two, but sooner or later, if they rely upon being boosted, they will lose their footing and slip back down towards

the bottom. There are others who get up a little way by dragging down those who have already made some progress, and these too are sure, sooner or later, to meet with disaster. The boy Gideon was not boosted nor did he pull himself up by dragging others down. He assaulted the cliff with determination and perseverance. The experience which he had in reaching his first promotion or halting place was valuable to him in enabling him to reach the second, and so he has gone on steadily until he is at the very top in his chosen work.

In the sketch of his life which we have before us to-day it appears that his first duty for the Company, fifty years ago, was to sweep out the office. Now nothing is said as to how he performed that simple job, and yet we all know very definitely just what he did and did not do. He did not sweep the dust under the table or under the desk or into the corners, but he swept that office thoroughly, perhaps as it had never been swept before. At any rate he swept it so well as to attract the attention and induce the favorable comment of his employers, making them willing to test him on more important work. In the popular operetta of "The Lass



PLYMOUTH CORDAGE CO. IN THE UNITED STATES AND IN CANADA

who Loved a Sailor," commonly known as "Pinafore," Sir Joseph Porter, K. C. B., tells the story of his life. This is the description of his first employment in a lawyer's office:

"I cleaned the windows and I swept the floor and I polished up the handle of the big front door, — I polished up the handle so carefully that now I am the ruler of the Queen's Navy." So we may say of Mr. Holmes that he swept the office so carefully that now he is the head of our great company.

Merit alone has been the cause of his success. We have just sung "America." One of the principal reasons why our country is dear to us and why we rejoice in singing its praises is that in these United States there is no passport to the highest office in private or in public life so potent as merit.

A few weeks ago the people of the whole country on the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln paid to his memory a most impressive tribute. He too started at the foot of the cliff. By merit alone he rose to be our President. That in this country there is no barrier which merit cannot pass is well expressed in the Constitution of this State. I

think it is in the sixth article of part first of the Constitution in which practically these words are used: Public office is not hereditary nor transmissible to children or descendants or relatives by blood, and to state that a man is born a magistrate or a law-giver or a judge is both absurd and unnatural.

We are not here to celebrate any great single work of Mr. Holmes, but we are here to express our appreciation of the grand total of the good work of each day of all the months in all the fifty years of his service. That employees and stockholders alike join heartily and enthusiastically in this expression there has already been the best of evidence, and I venture to prophesy that still more conclusive proof will be given before this festival is ended.

It is reported to me that Mrs. Holmes, a short time ago, in telling of the first days of their married life, said that she well remembered how pale and handsome he was, as with a smile on his face he looked up at her from a hole which he was digging to serve as a cesspool. That recollection of hers has a sweet pathos in it and is an eloquent testimonial to the man. Whatever he has done he has so done that the man

has dignified the work. As Mrs. Holmes in their early married life saw beauty in his face when he was at work digging that hole, and as she may well be justified in thinking him handsome still, so the directors to-day see in his face the expression of his life, and they have employed the well-known artist, Mr. I. M. Gaugengigl, to paint his portrait to be hung in the office of the Company, that the beneficent influence of his face may be exerted there when he is absent as well as when he is present. It is my privilege now to unveil this portrait. (*Long continued applause followed the unveiling of the portrait.*)

As we all know, Mr. Holmes is still a young man. He is a younger man even than I am — just six days younger. You see how much younger he looks. That goes to prove that his life, with and for the Company, has agreed with him remarkably well. The fact that he is still young is one of the causes of our happiness to-day. It means a continuance of the good things of the past, and so we all, stockholders and employees alike, not only congratulate him to-day, but also congratulate ourselves. We rejoice and are exceedingly glad that we are

justified in the expectation that we shall be blessed for a long time with that unfailing and wise devotion to our interests which has endeared him to us, and which for these many years has been a controlling influence in promoting the prosperity of our Company. (*Applause.*)

ADDRESS OF
MR. RICHARD McLEAN

President Loring said:

There are still eight men on the pay rolls of the Company who were working for the Company when Mr. Holmes first went to work in the office fifty years ago. One of these was his first "boss," and two of these are still working for the Company. Besides being contemporaries of Mr. Holmes, they have also been his friends; and it was most fitting that they should be intrusted by the operatives with the present which all the operatives of the Company have joined in getting for Mr. Holmes. I have the pleasure of introducing Mr. Richard McLean. (*Applause.*)

ADDRESS OF
MR. RICHARD McLEAN

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

IT gives me very great pleasure to be here to-day to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the business connection of our worthy treasurer.

Having known him all these years, and having been in daily touch with him in business of this Plymouth Cordage Company for twenty-one years of his management, in all this long period our intercourse was always pleasant and courteous.

So it is a great pleasure for me, in behalf of the older men who have grown gray with him in the service, and also in behalf of all the employees of the Plymouth Cordage Company, to present to him this loving cup.

It may appear to be empty, but it is not; if you can see what is within its brim you see that it is full and running over with esteem and best wishes of every one of these employees. (Turning to Mr. Holmes.) Sir, in behalf of these

employees I present to you this loving cup. Also let me add: the committee which I represent thought you ought to have a cane in addition to the cup, which I now present to you. As you lean upon this cane I want you, sir, to remember that you can always lean upon your old friends for any support that they can give you. (*Applause.*)

ADDRESS OF
MR. WILLIAM LOWELL PUTNAM

President Loring said:

The stockholders of the Company did not wish this day to pass without bestowing on Mr. Holmes a substantial gift to mark their appreciation of his character and ability.

They have appointed a committee to carry out their wishes, and have chosen a chairman who has some timely *words to speak on this occasion. I introduce the man of the* hour, *William Lowell Putnam.*

ADDRESS OF
MR. WILLIAM LOWELL PUTNAM

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

IT is a great honor to have been deputed to present on behalf of the stockholders their gift to Mr. Holmes on this joyful anniversary. It has been a great privilege to share in the arrangements for giving their enthusiasm some chance to show itself in action. As one of them writes in sending his contribution: "It is a pleasure to have any part in a testimonial so well deserved."

A friend of mine starting on a journey in foreign countries conceived the happy idea of having a card printed for use in shopping, bearing on its face in many languages the question, "What does it cost?" After receiving his answer he turned to the happily expectant shopkeeper the reverse side, which bore the painful legend, "I will give you half." For us, however, there was no such sad experience; the cards we receive read: "I will give you double." One stockholder, referring to his

contribution, writes: "The amount is so insignificant, it seems to me, for such a worthy cause, that I wish it might have been an automobile instead of a watch." And that was the feeling of all. All were glad to join in giving, and all would gladly have given more.

You remember the old conundrum: "Who was the smallest man mentioned in the Bible?" And the answer: "Peter, because he slept on his watch." Alas! this modern time-piece is too small a thing to serve so excellent a purpose, but it does not matter for we all know that Mr. Holmes never does go to sleep on his watch.

Small as it is, it carries a mountain of regard and gratitude and honor from our six hundred and sixty stockholders.

We hope that it will prove a timely gift and wish that the perpetual calendar on its face may record for Mr. Holmes another useful and prosperous fifty years. (*Applause.*)

ADDRESS OF
MR. GIDEON FRANCIS HOLMES

President Loring said:

We can turn out good rope at Plymouth or Welland; rope which you can trust to hold you to your anchor in the fiercest storm; rope that you can swing yourself over a precipice with and know that it will not break. But only the boy, with the help of God, can turn out the man that you can trust.

We can, and do, give the boy the chance, but he must do the rest. There was a boy born around here who turned out such a man. I introduce a man you can trust, the hero of the day, Gideon Francis Holmes.

ADDRESS OF
MR. GIDEON FRANCIS HOLMES

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

YOUR expressions of personal friendship and affection have touched me greatly and of which I am not lacking in appreciation. Many of you have come from a long distance; busy men, holding responsible positions; yet you find time to come here, at no little personal inconvenience, to help me celebrate. Hard would be the heart that was not deeply touched by such evidence of friendship.

During the past few years many of my friends have asked me what I proposed to do on my Fiftieth Anniversary, but, as usual, they have helped me out and answered the question themselves. Their kindness and affection are most beautifully expressed in this Loving Cup, Cane, Watch, and (Glass Pitcher from Welland). Not only the gifts themselves, but the kind thoughts which prompted the employees, directors, and stockholders will always remain in my heart as fond memories of this celebration.

I doubt if there are many at the present time who fully realize the changes that have taken place in this vicinity during the past fifty years. Going back to the commencement of my services with the Plymouth Cordage Company, there were only twenty-seven houses and two stores between the house where I now live and the Kingston line, which is a distance of about one mile and one eighth. There were no side streets, but there was a lane leading to one or two houses located at the foot of what is now Castle Street, also a lane leading to two houses owned by the Company, which were located at the end of what is now called Bourne Street. The house on the hill was called the Wood Block, and in getting to it we had to pass a dense swamp on the one side and a heavy strip of wood on the other. These buildings, located on lanes, are included in the above number.

At the present time, between my house and the Kingston line, including side streets, there are three hundred and twenty-three houses, nearly thirty stables, two churches and a large chapel, thirty-three stores, a library, and a dining hall.

There were no sidewalks in this part of the

VISITORS ALIGHTING FROM SPECIAL TRAIN, ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

town, but on one side of the road, usually on the easterly side, there was a foot-path. When the weather was rough we had to take to the roads, which were none too good in those days, and very poor as compared with the present time. If any of us wanted to go into the village there was no waiting around on the corners or looking for the white posts to take an electric car, for there was none. There were no public conveyances of any kind, and it was either walk, ask a ride of some neighbor, or stay at home. In those times, however, it was not considered a hardship to have to walk two or more miles; in fact, even after the telegraph was introduced, and before a branch was put into our office, messages were brought to us by a man, living in the village, we having an arrangement with him to deliver them at a cost of fifty cents per trip, and he usually walked both out and in.

In the manufacturing part, all of the small work, such as Spunyarn, small Wormline, Hambroline, etc., was made by hand. Four spinning wheels were regularly in commission, and every now and then a fifth one was started up. These have all been laid aside and are something of

the past. The slow speed, open flyer spinning-jennies are also of the past and in their place we now have the fast speed closed flyer. Lappers were discarded years ago and in their place we have spreaders. It was only a little more than fifty years ago that inventors were trying to bring out machines for making rope, particularly in the small sizes, and when I first came here to work there were only seven machines. Great changes and improvements have been made on the first machines that were produced, and for several years it has not been actually necessary to have the ropewalk in order to produce rope of large sizes and long lengths.

If Longfellow had been born seventy-five years later I fancy we would never have had that beautiful poem entitled, "The Ropewalk," and I think that some of the little boys, in most instances not over ten years of age, who used to turn the spinning wheels and were obliged to be at their places and commence work at five o'clock in the morning, would feel inclined to change the next to the last line of the last verse of Longfellow's poem, and have it read:

"*With a drowsy, dreamy feeling,*
And the spinners backward go."

But, happily, all these conditions have been changed and now our mill starts at seven o'clock instead of five in the morning, and most of the monotonous, humdrum work of fifty years ago, such as turning the wheel, tending the lapper, following small rope on the grounds, etc., are things of the past.

It has always been a matter of great satisfaction to me that I could depend on the hearty co-operation of the employees of our Company. They have always shown a spirit of determination to excel in everything they undertake. If music is wanted they furnish a band that will give you music better than most bands and which will compare favorably with the best. You have an illustration of this here to-day; and I want to say that I appreciate having our own band furnish music for this occasion.

The Field Day Sports and tent exhibitions of the employees are always exceedingly interesting and draw a large crowd of people from the surrounding towns; and it is this same spirit of co-operation and determination to excel that has enabled the Plymouth Cordage Company to put goods on the market, of the best quality that can be produced. They are well known over

the entire United States and Canada, and it is not an uncommon thing to get letters from foreign lands speaking in the most complimentary way of the quality of goods we turn out. We have recently had an illustration of this point. One of our friends within a few days sent us a letter in which the following extract appeared:

"Not having had any orders for some time from our good friends in Holland, for whom you have repeatedly made large hawsers, we wrote them recently and to-day are in receipt of their letter, which is so interesting that we quote from it as follows:

"'It is quite true that we have not had the pleasure of addressing you for some time. This, however, is not due to a lack of appreciation of the good quality of your ropes, but is a result of the strength and durability of the material they are made of, as we are able to do with same so much longer as with ropes we used formerly. All our tugs are well stocked with hawsers, but no doubt we will want some more ropes when the year advances. We won't fail to let you know about our requirements.'"

And whether it be rope, twine, or any other goods made by our Company, the system and

organization are such that the trade has received in the past, and will continue to receive in the future, the very best that can be produced. The word "PLYMOUTH" stands for quality, and is known the world over. The system and organization were never in more perfect working order than at the present time. My faith and confidence in the organization warrants me in saying that the word "PLYMOUTH" will, in the future, as it has in the past, stand for the best that can be produced. To me the future of our Company is bright and hopeful.

There have been many times, during the fifty years, when the outlook has seemed discouraging and the future dark and gloomy, but I have had such hearty support, on the part of the directors, and splendid backing by the employees, that obstacles have been surmounted and the outcome quite satisfactory; and as I review the past, I can say I have spent fifty very pleasant and happy years. (*Applause.*)

ADDRESS OF
MR. B. PRESTON CLARK

President Loring said:

We believe that a Company like ours is a valuable asset to the Commonwealth, and a man like Mr. Holmes, a jewel in her crown.

We are not a predatory corporation; we ask and take no illegal rebates; and we keep out of court. We mean to give every man his due. We are decent people — at least we think so — and so we were not afraid to ask a judge of our highest court, the Hon. William Caleb Loring, to speak here to-day. Unfortunately he cannot; but in his place I shall call one who was for twenty years a competitor of Mr. Holmes, and nevertheless a warm friend and now a director of this Company, one who is noted for his philanthropy and who is a judge of men — Mr. B. Preston Clark.

ADDRESS OF
MR. B. PRESTON CLARK

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

MY only claim to speak here to-day is that I am perhaps the only man present who, as manager of the Pearson Cordage Company, and later of the McCormick mills, was a keen competitor of the Plymouth Cordage Company for nearly twenty years.

A cannibal was once asked whether he knew a certain missionary, to which he replied, "Yes, I knew him intimately, I ate a piece of him." In the present case the result has been quite otherwise. I cannot truly say of the Plymouth Cordage Company what the cannibal did of the missionary, but am quite persuaded that the missionary has devoured me entirely.

As far as one in that unusual position can say anything, I should like to speak briefly of the Plymouth Cordage Company from without and within.

As a competitor they hit hard, but always above the belt. The greatest volume of trade

consistent with perfect integrity was the measure of the keenness of their competition. But only as it has been my privilege to come to know this Company from within have I at all realized what it actually is. It is not often that the chance comes to me to have a joke at Mr. Holmes' expense, but I have to-day, and he has given it to me. He has spoken of our organization; of its loyalty, its ability, and its permanent character, and all that he says of it is true. But in his desire, ever modestly, to keep in the background he has unconsciously paid himself a higher tribute than any of which I could have thought.

The soul of the Plymouth Cordage Company is in this mill to-day. For it is the men and women whose united work is spelling success that are its life. It is an organism, instinct with vitality and loyalty.

As is known to us all, the trend of American business for the last quarter of a century has been toward great enterprises, huge machines; and the men who have come to the front have been those who could build and guide such machines. To-day the wise business men are searching for those who have, with this con-

SCENES AT THE BANQUET

structive ability, the capacity to make those great machines alive, and who shall, through their personality and capacity for leadership, inspire that personal loyalty which is one of our finest human qualities. And this Mr. Holmes has done. As his ancestors came to this new, untried country, he has in his turn been a true pioneer. He has created not simply a machine, but a live thing, with the permanent power within itself of growth and development. It is from a fairly wide knowledge of most of the concerns in this country in our line of business that I can safely say that no one of them compares with the Plymouth Cordage Company in this respect. In the character and ability of those who manufacture our product, who distribute our goods, who furnish our raw materials, and who are the owners of our stock, as well as in that of our President and Directors who represent those stockholders, there is a spirit of team work, and a hard driving force that is carrying us to the front all along the line, and is bound to increase with every coming year.

It is a fact that each and every one of us here to-day is proud and glad to be a part of this organization. And we shall go away from here

with the purpose to continue this celebration in honor of Mr. Holmes along the lines which he himself has suggested, by doing our part and a little more to strengthen the organization and maintain its high reputation.

But besides our assured and increasing commercial success, there is yet another and a broader value in this great Company. It stands for honesty and ability. Mr. Holmes and all those associated with him in his company stand like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land in this age when great commercial success is not always joined with great commercial honesty.

The standards of this Company help to show the high water mark, bar none, of the commercial life of to-day, and as such it does a service to the public and this Commonwealth which is incalculable.

The coming generation of young men, eager and alert, are ever entering the threshold of the great world of commerce. At first, life looks simple. But soon comes to each and every one of them the question, What standards shall I adopt in my business life? Can I be both honest and successful, or must it be a choice between the two? And to that question, so vital in its

bearing on this American life of ours, men like Mr. Holmes, men such as those who make up our working force — in a word a concern like ours — give, and shall give for many a day, the answer in no uncertain tones. (*Applause.*)

ADDRESS OF

MR. EDMOND J. LINDSAY

President Loring said:

Some of you may know, and some of you may not know, that Mr. Bourne Spooner, prior to the foundation of the Plymouth Cordage Company, was engaged at New Orleans in the manufacture of rope by slave labor. One of his ideas in founding the works at Plymouth was to show that rope made by free labor was better and could compete successfully with that made by slaves.

To-day we are confronted by the same problem. In many of the western States prison plants have been erected to make binder twine. This is not done to give the necessary employment to the prisoners, but for a commercial venture, as is shown by their running their machinery at night to get out a big product. So Mr. Holmes has the same problem to fight that Mr. Spooner had. But Mr. Holmes has an able, honest, and capable lieutenant in the field, not only a wise counsellor and aid, but also a warm admirer and a personal friend, whom it is now my pleasure to introduce — Mr. Edmond J. Lindsay of Milwaukee.

ADDRESS OF
MR. EDMOND J. LINDSAY

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I COUNT it a privilege to participate in this anniversary celebration. With the official invitation to be present, there was included a request to "make a short address upon my relations with Mr. Holmes, or such other matter bearing upon the celebration as might seem to me appropriate." But coupled with this was a time limit, which in view of the duration of my relations with Mr. Holmes, may prove embarrassing. When, however, I thought of the number present who have had relations with him, of which it would be a pleasure to speak, and who would have no opportunity, I realized the favor shown me in allotment of any time for such expression. There is a legend or tradition concerning the first visit of Mr. Holmes to Milwaukee, for which I suspect he is in some measure responsible. The story is, that he found himself on a cold, raw, wintry day landed at a small wooden railway station without com-

fort or conveniences but indicating the Milwaukee terminal of the road. Upon inquiring for a sleigh or carriage, he was directed to a forlorn individual in command of a raw boned animal attached to a pung, on which was a rough box, a board across for a seat, which was draped with a well-seasoned buffalo robe, minus the fur. With this escort he found his customer, transacted his business, and was again safely returned to the station, where another dilemma confronted him. The five-dollar bill handed to the driver was a "stunner." He had never handled a piece of money of such value, and it was a question whether it could be changed. This, however, was duly accomplished after many of the business places of the city had been visited. Now this is supposed by him to be a fair illustration of existing conditions in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, when he first knew the city. I speak of this to show that our friend who stands for all that is true, straightforward and level-headed can, when occasion demands, give rein to his imagination.

Long and intimate acquaintance with Plymouth Cordage, when the imagination is not held in check, seems to lead to strange exagger-

TAKEN AT THE BANQUET
WAITRESSES — CORDAGE BAND — WAITERS

ation, as further shown by letter received this week from a Wisconsin customer who wrote:

"I have been selling Plymouth twine for the last five years exclusively and my predecessors for thirty-five years; making an unbroken record of Plymouth twine sales in Waterloo for forty years. My customers often state that they have threaded their binders at the beginning of harvest with Plymouth Diamond L twine, and have unthreaded at close of harvest without break, or one minute's trouble with twine during the whole harvest."

Possibly Mr. Holmes on that first visit may have, through the predecessor of the writer from whom I have quoted, then and there arranged for the introduction of Plymouth Diamond L binder twine into Wisconsin, and the binder needles have been threaded with it ever since.

A poet, whom all the world loves, says: "Oh, that some one the gift would give us to see ourselves as others see us." (This is not given in the original vernacular.) This desire may some time have been in the heart of our friend, and if so, may not this be a fitting time to grant such wish? If so, I will gladly contribute my quota, and in doing so, comply with the condi-

tion attached to my invitation, and speak of Mr. Holmes as I have known him — a man of sterling integrity, of rare sagacity and shrewdness in business, but whose keen perception is always tempered with regard for the rights of others. It is not because "honesty is the best policy," that inflexible integrity dominates his business intercourse with his fellows. This characteristic, with him, is blended with a friendship that has its root in the golden rule: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." His successful management of his great company has been phenomenal, and cannot be accounted for by shrewdness and sagacity alone, but by a combination of these qualities with the others named. He has faced perplexities and difficulties never encountered by his predecessors, and before which other strong men, contemporary with himself in the same business and with equal opportunities, have succumbed and made shipwreck, while he has carried his company steadily forward from year to year with increasing success and prestige. I know I speak for hundreds here to-day when I say, no employer has ever had more enthusiastic loy-

alty and faithful co-operation than is found in the ranks of those who are now associated with him in the Plymouth Cordage Works, and the same can be said of those who, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and the Gulf to the snowclad mountains of the north, are the representatives of this great Company. Plymouth products are now everywhere recognized as the highest type of excellence in the cordage industry, and it is also recognized that the man who, more than any other one man, has accomplished this, is Gideon F. Holmes.

I would like to speak of other personal traits as we know him, but must forbear. How well some of us remember business adjustments that have been made, and differences bridged by his quiet considerateness made irresistible when accompanied by the twinkle of the kindly eyes of our friend. Controversy has ceased and friendship has been cemented. Added to all this, he is a philanthropist, not the sentimental kind that makes a trade of philanthropy, but the broad-minded, tolerant, patient observer of men, who knows the frailties of human nature, and is ready always and everywhere to make all allowances for them. In his own personality he

is cheerfully welcome wherever he goes. There is inspiration and helpfulness in his friendship. He lives in the love and confidence of many, and he will be remembered with grateful and abiding affection. (*Applause.*)

ADDRESS OF
MAJOR THOMAS S. HOBBS

President Loring said:

From Mr. Holmes in the office to the youngest boy who tends a balling machine in the mills we mean to be fair, and we mean to be honest. I know that self-praise goes but little ways, but I also know that a good name, like a rose, carries its fragrance with it wherever it goes.

There are men who have carried the name of the Plymouth Cordage Company west across the plains of Assiniboia and Saskatchewan, and north to Hudson's Bay. One of these is with us to-day. I mean, Major Thomas S. Hobbs of London, Ontario.

ADDRESS OF
MAJOR THOMAS S. HOBBS

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

IT affords me much pleasure to be with you this day. When we first heard of this intended celebration we were not sure of being counted in. In fact we were something like the school marm who asked a class of small boys the question, "Who was the first man?" A little nipper at the foot of the class held up his hand. The teacher said, "Who was it, Willie?" "George Washington," said Master Willie. "Oh, no!" was the reply, "did you never hear of Adam?" "Oh," said the lad, "I did n't know foreigners counted."

Mr. Crocker, one of your directors, kindly called on me to say a few words to-day. When Joseph Choate was your Ambassador to the Court of St. James the leading members of the Bar in London thought to pay him the honor of calling him to the Bar of The Inner Temple. Mr. Choate, in accepting it, said he would tell

them the story of an Irish Baronet, who, having become somewhat reduced in circumstances, sent his only son, Michael, to London to take up the profession of law so as to redeem the family fortunes. Michael studied hard, passed his "exams" and was finally called to the Bar. The Irish peasantry near the old home heard that Michael was doing *well* in London and they thought it would be the proper thing to call on the old gentleman and tender their congratulations coupled with wishes for the dear old man's long life in their midst. Having proceeded in a body to the Hall the old Baronet thanked them for Michael and himself and confidentially told them that Michael had recently been called to the Bar. One Irishman said to another who was standing in the crowd, "Pat, what the divil is that anyway?" He replied, "Hist, Mike, I don't know, but if it 's what I think it is, they 'll only have to càll Michael wanst."

Mr. President, I 'm proud to be called on to say a few words in appreciation of Mr. Holmes' service in connection with the Plymouth Cordage Company. Victor Hugo says, "The head that does not turn toward the horizon of the past contains neither thought nor love." We

believe this and to-day we hold half a century in retrospect.

In this age of keen competition and specialization it is a good man who can do one thing well. Mr. Holmes has done that one thing with a marvellous degree of success. His career proves the truth of the saying that "Genius consists in getting on to your job." Mr. Holmes not only got on to the job, but stayed on through the perplexities and changes of the past fifty years.

One great reason of Mr. Holmes' success has been his steadfastness of purpose and his sterling integrity in all business matters.

Some one has said that the reason people succeed in this world who mind their business is because they have so little competition. Mr. Holmes has never troubled about the business of others, but others have been greatly troubled about Mr. Holmes' business, but from first to last have been unable to express one word of adverse criticism.

Two or three years ago we invited the Plymouth Cordage Company to come over into the Promised Land; we were able to say as Moses said to Aaron, "Come with us and we will do

thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." The Plymouth Cordage plant is now one of the features in that part of the country, and when, Mr. President, in the year 1924 your Company may commemorate its one hundredth anniversary, we are in hope that the Welland end of your mammoth business will warrant your directors in celebrating the event on the banks of the Niagara River in which vicinity your fine Canadian plant is located; and we further trust that Mr. Gideon F. Holmes will as now be at the helm in the affairs of this most important and successful enterprise.

Sometime ago a New Brunswicker went into the Halifax Hotel, in Halifax, and, after sizing up the audience in the refreshment room, stated that he could lick any man in the room. Meeting with no response he was still more encouraged and boldly stated that he could lick any man in the city of Halifax. Not being taken up even on this wholesale challenge he went still further and claimed he could lick any man in the whole blooming Province of Nova Scotia. An old timer from Antigonish walked over and landed him a couple which put him out of busi-

EMPLOYEES' LIBRARY — LORING READING ROOM

ness for a few minutes. As he was being helped up some one inquired what the trouble was, and the New Brunswicker replied that he covered too darn much territory. Not so the Plymouth Cordage Company, for while they have covered the territory the other chaps, who do the boasting, get the knockout blow.

When we think of the Plymouth Cordage Company fifty years ago, and then consider the splendid position that it occupies to-day in the industrial world, it recalls those lines of Lord Tennyson's:

"Yet I doubt not through the ages
One increasing purpose runs,
And the minds of men are broadened
With the process of the Suns."

Throughout Canada Plymouth twines have a status equalled by none. It recalls the experience of the Englishman who struck a country tavern in the Canadian northwest where the good wife did the cooking and the "Boss" waited on table. The "Boss" asked the Englishman if he would take "Soup." He replied, "Beg your pardon." "Do you want any soup?" inquired the landlord. "What kind of soup?"

was the reply. "Darn good soup," said the landlord with emphasis on the "Darn." So with Plymouth twine. When a man says, "What kind of twine?" "Plymouth twine," is all need be said.

Mr. Holmes has evinced a marvellous appetite for business, an appetite that reminds one of the cowboy who had to make a long trip across country and called at a settler's house for dinner. Approaching the table the hungry man seized knife and fork and was setting to, when the host said, "Excuse me, we always say Grace." "Oh, all right, boss," replied the hungry man, "nothing you can say will affect my appetite." So with you, Mr. Holmes, no matter what is said, nothing affects your appetite for trade.

When we consider the growth and the brilliant success of this Company and that its position to-day is largely due to Mr. Gideon F. Holmes, we can most appropriately apply that beautiful phrase of Sir Walter Scott's: "To accomplish such results is worth having lived for."

Good things will go when captained by live men with character and personal force.

Mr. President, speaking as one of the staff of

the Plymouth Cordage Company, in conclusion, let me quote the words of Emerson:

"He that gives us better homes, better books, better tools, a brighter outlook and a wider hope, him will we crown with laurel." (*Applause.*)

ADDRESS OF THE
HON. WILLIAM M. GERMAN, M.P.

President Loring said:

The British flag had only ceased to float at Plymouth for less than thirty years when this Company was founded. Some New Englanders who did not sympathize with the Revolution, but remained loyal to their King, left their homes and settled in Canada. A colony of such, from Connecticut, settled at Welland, Ontario, and founded the town where the Union Jack floats over the newest plant of the Plymouth Cordage Company.

We have with us to-day a citizen of Welland, a distinguished member of Parliament from Canada, and he will tell us what they think of Mr. Holmes in Ontario. I present the Honorable William M. German, M.P.

ADDRESS OF THE HON. WILLIAM M. GERMAN, M. P.

Mr. President, Mr. Holmes, Ladies and Gentlemen:

TO simply say that I am pleased to be present at this banquet to-day in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of Mr. Holmes' connection with the Plymouth Cordage Company is but poorly expressing the feeling of pleasure which I have. Outside of my desire to join in celebrating this anniversary, I was pleased to have an opportunity of visiting this beautiful old town of Plymouth, which over two hundred years ago saw the dawn of settlement, expansion, and enterprise in this great country. I was also anxious to see the works of the Plymouth Cordage Company which have been so long established in this place, and I can assure you, Mr. President, that they far exceed the expectation which I had formed regarding them, and the success of this great enterprise is, as I am pleased to know, very considerably due to the energy, intelligence, and careful foresight of your worthy Treasurer. It could hardly be

possible, sir, that your Treasurer, springing from the stock that he did, could be other than an energetic, determined, and far-seeing man. Two hundred and eighty-nine years ago a little wind-tossed craft of a few hundred tons' burden, freighted with human souls, landed on these shores. We, at this day, stand almost appalled at the idea of people crossing the great Atlantic ocean, leaving the home of their forefathers and their childhood, in a ship no larger than the little "Mayflower" and seeking out homes in this new country, which was then a vast, mighty wilderness, and the courage and determination which actuated these people has been the courage and determination which has opened up, developed, and made this great country of the United States. The fact that your Treasurer, Mr. President, is a lineal descendant of these hardy pioneers is a guarantee of the stability of his character and his far-seeing business ability. I have been very pleased indeed, sir, to listen to the remarks of my good friend and fellow countryman, Mr. Hobbs, and I am inclined to think that your Company turns out something more real than cordage. I have known Mr. Hobbs for some thirty years, sat with him in the

Ontario Legislature for several years, and during all this time I have never known him to make a speech such as he has made to-day, and I am inclined to think that it really must be by reason of his close and intimate business connection with your Company, and I cannot but think that his connection with you has developed in him the great oratorical powers which he has displayed to-day; and I am also pleased, sir, to feel that I am also, though in a small way, connected with the interests of your Company, and was to some small extent instrumental in inducing you to establish your works in Canada. It has been said by Honorable Mr. Hobbs that when you first went to Welland to view the land you had the ladies with you. My only regret is that the ladies have not seen fit as yet to repeat their visit. Possibly they were frightened by the very sticky mud which they encountered at that time, but I can assure these ladies that if they will come again on my invitation they will find a much more congenial climate and pleasant going than they encountered when first there. We cannot of course, sir, expect that your works at Welland will, for some years to come, equal the enormous plant which you have here, but I

can assure you that so far as aiding your Canadian enterprise is concerned you will receive every possible concession and assistance from our Government as you can in fairness expect, and as liberal treatment as the Government can give consistent with the general welfare of our people, and I can only, sir, express the hope that within a few years your works in Canada will be sufficiently prosperous to be able to surround yourselves there with as contented, intelligent, and fine appearing a body of employees as I see gathered together in this room to-day. I congratulate you, sir, and your Company, on the great business success which you have achieved, and I sincerely trust that you, your Board of Directors, and that you, Mr. Holmes, may live to enjoy the fruits of the success which you have created and to which you are undoubtedly entitled. (*Applause.*)

ADDRESS OF THE REVEREND W. W. DORNAN, D.D.

President Loring said:

The really important thing for all of us is our Spiritual life and those eternal considerations of right and justice which regulate all our acts, not only on Sundays, but on every day.

We have with us to-day a man who has given up his life to teaching God's word and the truth as he sees it, and in whose church Mr. Holmes sits as a listener. I introduce to you the Reverend W. W. Dornan of Plymouth.

ADDRESS OF THE REVEREND W. W. DORNAN, D.D.

Mr. President:

I APPRECIATE the honor extended to me on this occasion by your committee, that I have the opportunity of speaking a word of appreciation regarding the services and characteristics of the one whom to-day Plymouth delights to honor.

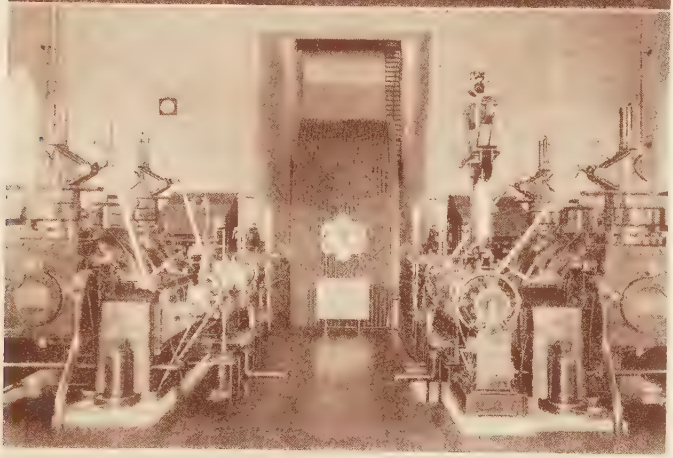
Gentlemen, I rise to speak laboring under one or two great disabilities.

The first came upon me before this most excellent dinner was served, and as I thought of the splendid achievements of the honored treasurer of this Cordage Company, Mr. Holmes, in lifting this plant to take the place in commercial importance and value, second to none in the North American Continent. And as I looked around these tables upon the splendid type of employees I wished the opportunity to speak was given then. I felt like that scene on the deck of a transatlantic steamer where a young man standing upon the deck with both hands in

his pockets and careening with the vessel while he filled his lungs with the ozone of the great deep said, "When I am at sea, I can't contain myself." A fellow passenger leaning over the rail, and with a face ashen pale and a sickly expression, turned, and looking up, said, "My friend, that 's just the way I feel myself." But the opportunity to give vent to my feelings had not yet come when I was full for utterance.

The second disability came to me when the dinner was concluded, and, like a balloon, everything was stretched to its utmost capacity, then was I too full for utterance. In this circumstance, judging from optical evidence, I am not alone. Like the Scotch minister who, coming home late one night, met one of his parishioners who was much the worse of drink. Said the minister, "James, I am afraid that the whiskey has gotten the upper hand to-night." James replied rather confidentially, "Never mind, minister, just keep quiet and say nothing about it, nobody has seen you but me, and I am not very sober myself."

My third disability happened when I listened to the goodly flow of oratory and, as the speakers glowingly and eloquently spoke of the char-



NUMBER 3 MILL
Gas Producer House — Gas Engines, 1000 H.P.
Mill During Construction

acteristics of our friend, Mr. Holmes, I began to see my speech go piece by piece, and I wondered what they were going to leave of Mr. Holmes for me. Two or three times I concluded that all that would be necessary for me to do would be to stand over the remains and pronounce the benediction. I feel like the old minister who had exchanged pulpits on a certain Sabbath and found that the rats had been in the barrel of sacred tradition and chewed some pages of his sermon manuscript which he had not discovered until in the pulpit. He very frankly faced the audience and said, "I do not know my text, nor indeed my subject, several pages are gone by the rats, so, with your permission, I will begin where the rats left off."

Fifty years of service and yet young is the lot that falls but to few men. This is no ordinary occasion that brings us together to do honor to one who in twenty-three years rose from office boy to the manager and propagator of a great concern, and who for twenty-seven years has proved himself to be a worthy successor in the line of the indefatigable far-seeing "Bourne Spooner."

When a man rises to a great and noble task, all the great and noble characteristics of the man appear. Struggle is the true law of evolution from the lower to the higher, for too often it has been exemplified that starting at the highest there is a descent to nothing. It makes little difference, however, how a man comes into the world provided he chooses to be a man.

One of the ways to success in life is to be continually fitting oneself for the larger opportunity that may come. This Mr. Holmes was always doing from the first day he entered the office of this Company up to the present hour. He was not seeking to do simply what he was paid for, but seeking to learn something that would pay him better by and by. It was the characteristic of industry. The honor that came to Mr. Holmes was not in receiving the high office of treasurer, but that in receiving it, he has filled it to overflowing with a splendid business capacity. The man magnifies the office.

The second characteristic which I have noted in our honored friend is the thing that I believe has added greatly to his years, — his appreciation of the humorous. Whenever an anti-climax comes to his notice, either in men or

things, he can enjoy it to the fullest. It is the salvation of any man to be able to laugh.

The third characteristic, and the last I shall speak of, is his honesty. No man that knows Mr. Holmes can for a moment doubt his honesty and business integrity. There is nothing so helps the work of the church of Christ in lifting men like an honest factory. Honesty in a concern incorporates itself into the workmen employed. In this regard I consider this place by its business methods under the present management an asset to righteousness. At one time a rope was manufactured for a customer. It was to be pure Manila but in some unaccountable manner a spool of Sisal had gotten into the rope. It was discovered and reported, with the suggestion that it would be well to write the customer regarding it. "Very well," said the treasurer, "let it lie a few days"; at the end of which the treasurer sent word to undo the rope, take the Sisal out, and relay it. It must be all Manila. Reputation was at stake. A letter would not explain if such a rope had come into the hands of his competitors. No, the sagacity and business integrity of the management would not allow it to pass, and this high and honest stand-

ard is the thing that has made the name of the Plymouth Cordage Company to be depended upon the world over.

Such has its effect upon the moral life of the men employed. Moral degeneration may be cultivated by a dishonest principle in manufacturing.

We have a striking case in point in Scottish history. From about the year 1700 to 1800 the manufacture of silk gauzes and fine lawns flourished in Paisley. This business afforded excellent wages, sobriety and frugality being the general character of the Paisley weaver. Nearly one half of the town at that period was built and owned by the weavers. Each had his garden; many became excellent florists; some had a tolerable library, and all were politicians.

About the period of the French revolution Mr. William Pitt expressed more fear of the unrestricted political discussions of the Paisley weaver than of ten thousand armed men.

Significantly enough the period of Paisley's decadence began with the manufacture of a sham, an incentive to human vanity and pretence. The introduction of imitation Indian shawls paralyzed finally that grand body of

people and crowded the town with half-informed radicals and infidels.

This, sir, is the thing upon which I congratulate you most. By the honesty of your methods in business, you are teaching the manufacturing industries of the United States and Canada, if not of the world, that the true foundation for lasting business prosperity is righteousness and truth. May you live long to magnify your place along the lines which you so successfully have carried out for half a century. (*Applause.*)

A FIFTY-STRAND LAY
BY MR. E. D. VER PLANCK

President Loring said:

You have heard in prose, and in good prose, what our eminent Company has to say on this occasion, but it is now my agreeable duty to summon us, as a last recourse, the poetic muse to crown our banquet. He is something more than a poet, an able helper and friend of Mr. Holmes. I present Mr. E. D. Ver Planck.

A FIFTY-STRAND LAY

E. D. Ver Planck

LISTEN, my neighbors, and you shall hear,
How "Good Friend Holmes" began his career;
'T was March twenty-eight, in the year fifty-nine,
How few of us here can remember the time!

He said to his friends, "I cannot go more
With the girls and the boys to play on the shore;
I go to bed early, so early to rise,
For I must be healthy, get wealthy and wise.

"'To-morrow I take up the fight of my life;
The Cordage mill wants me to join in the strife,
And to show them, as only ambitious boys can,
How to sweep out an office on an up-to-date plan."

So he said to his friends, "Good-night" and "Sweet dreams,"
Just as the moon threw down her bright beams,

And lighted the waters of Massachusetts Bay,
Where, in years that are gone, the "Mayflower"
lay.

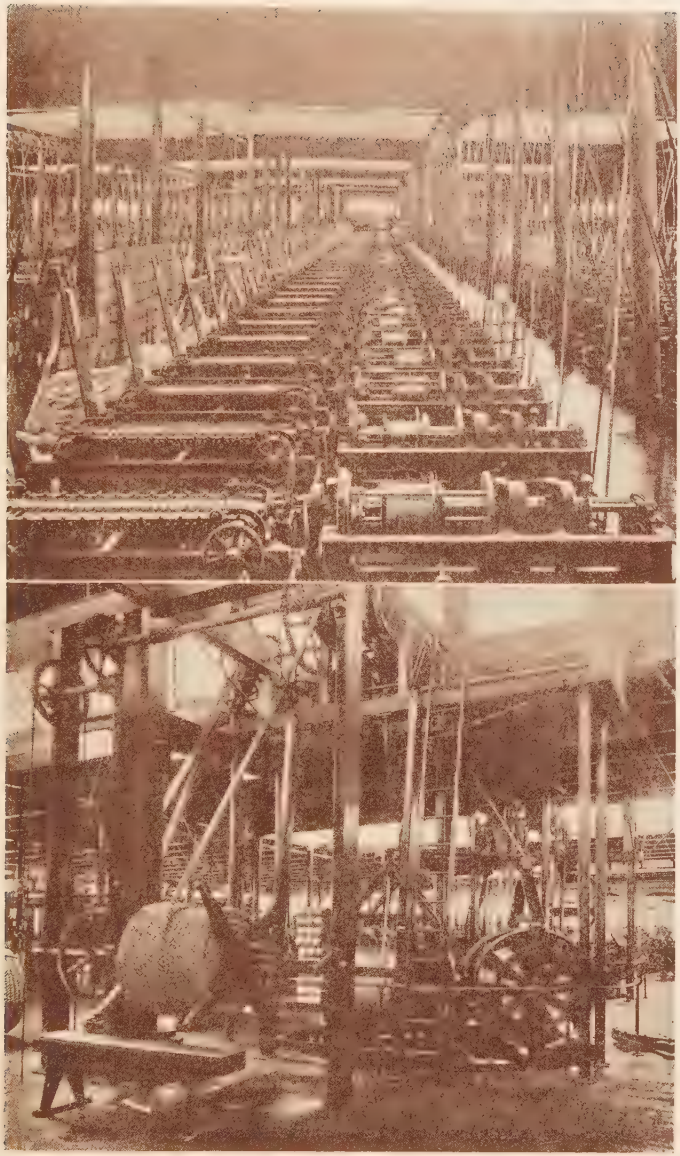
And he made a resolve, that at home or afar
He would never partake of refreshment from bar
But from that now before him, a form purified
By the ebb and the flow of old Plymouth's tide.

He lighted his candle and crept up to bed,
With visions of power, and might in his head.
Whatever this life held of joy, or of sorrow,
Awaited his bow and his plunge on the morrow.

Next morning this boy, on March twenty-eight,
Is brought back to earth, and the problem of fate,
By the clatter of footsteps, a knock at the door,
A summons to work at the mill by the shore.

A hurry of feet, a form in the dark,
The shape of a boy, pressing on for the mark.
That was all! And yet, through the light and
the gloom,
A future was then being carved by a broom.

You know the rest! How from broom to the pen
He worked his way up to a leader of men;



SPINNING AND ROPE-MAKING MACHINERY

How the company prospered, and mill, and then
mill,
Was added, and made to respond to his will;

How National Cordage loomed up as a master,
To buy out the works or inflict a disaster.
How the Plymouth turned out ball for ball,
And bade defiance to one and all;

How the years of panic, and stress, and strain,
Have done their worst, but all in vain.
The wheels turn round, the whistle blows,
The sound from Plymouth to Welland goes.

From Northern mounts of ice and snow,
To Tropic sands, the Products go,
And like the flag, marking England's scope,
The Sun never sets on Plymouth Rope.

Ambitions, yet jealous of honor and name,
Conservative, weighing with heart and with
brain,
Progressive, — and silent, — these attributes
made
The Leader, the Nestor, the Sphinx of the trade.

"Good Friend Holmes," though silver-crowned,
Is physically, mentally, heartily, sound;
And to-day we celebrate, all forgetful of strife,
The Golden Wedding of his business life.

Best wishes are his, for a future replete
With all the good things that makes life complete;
The Directors, Stockholders, Employees, all pray
For very many happy returns of the day.

(*Applause.*)

"LINES"
BY MR. WILLIS K. HEATH

President Loring said:

After being twisted up in Mr. Ver Planck's poem we have got all snarled up in some other "lines."

The oldest member of our office force and its venerated head has contributed to this occasion some "lines" which his voice will not allow him to read himself, but Mr. Crocker will now present an original poem by Mr. Willis K. Heath.

"LINES"

Willis K. Heath

VACATIONS — they are not for him —
About one year in ten
He takes a few weeks off, but vows
He will not go again.

"I get more rest and have more fun,"
We 've often heard him say,
"By sailing down off Manomet
And fishing half a day."

Nor does he always go alone;
He likes well to divide
The pleasure with his friends around
As partners of the tide.

There 's one old friend who joins him oft —
A fisherman is he —
His name I will not here divulge,
But it begins with *T*.

T's fish are of the *sportive* sort;
They die, but still they grow;
'T wixt here and Boston, I have heard,
They *double up* or so.

Not so with Mr. Holmes's fish;
They 're the old-fashioned kind,
Weigh sixteen ounces to the pound,
And often hard to find.

Cod, haddock, smelt, and mackerel —
They *all* come in to him —
He 's apt to fill his canvas bag
Up to its very brim.

The query comes: Why this success?
Why such a catch of fish?
You want to know the reason, friends,
I 'll gratify your wish.

He catches fish, a lot of them,
And sells our rope and twine,
Because he learned long, long ago
Just where to drop a line.

(*Applause.*)

COMMITTEES

COMMITTEES

ARRANGEMENTS

Augustus P. Loring, *Chairman*
Schuyler S. Bartlett
Robert A. Brown
Walter H. Brown
B. Preston Clark
George G. Crocker
John H. Damon
Edward K. Harris
Francis C. Holmes
W. E. C. Nazro
William L. Putnam
Thomas S. Hobbs
Edmond J. Lindsay
Henry F. Stoddard

INVITATIONS

B. Preston Clark, *Chairman*
T. Allen Bagnell
Edward B. Bayley
Willis K. Heath
Francis C. Holmes
Charles W. Leach
Harvey A. Soule
Ahira B. Kelley

SEATING

Schuyler S. Bartlett, *Chairman*
John A. Beever
Richard B. Brown
Edward D. Ver Planck
Charles J. Stegmaier
Henry L. Stegmaier
Thomas Swan
Edward S. Thayer

BUILDING AND DECORATIONS

John H. Damon, *Chairman*
Walter H. Brown
Wm. E. Churchill
Wm. Ingles Gay
W. E. C. Nazro
John E. Wright

MUSIC

John H. Damon, *Chairman*
Robert A. Brown
Francis C. Holmes

TRANSPORTATION

Francis C. Holmes, *Chairman*
George G. Crocker
H. K. Smith (Welland)

STOCKHOLDERS' TESTIMONIAL

William L. Putnam, *Chairman*
James D. Thurber
Percival Lowell
Henry M. Williams
Frank P. Priest

ADDRESSES AND PRINTING

George G. Crocker, *Chairman*
W. E. C. Nazro
Charles S. Davis
Chas. S. Rackemann
Ahira B. Kelley
Ellery Stedman

PRESENTATION

James Frothingham, *Chairman*
Richard McLean
Mathias Grozenger
Edward P. Noyes
James F. Kendrick
Philip Schaich
Alexander McLean
George Swan

SCENES AT THE BANQUET

USHERS FOR THE BALL

JOHN D. BREWER, *Head Usher*

DANIEL G. BROWN
LUTHER A. COOK
WILLIS F. CASH
JOHN L. KARLE
JACOB H. DRIES
HORATIO S. EVERSON
GEORGE W. GRIFFIN
ELMER E. HARLOW
AXEL E. T. HULTENIUS
ADAM PECK
JULIUS PECK
WILLIAM S. PIERCE
SIMON D. ROBICHAU
CHARLES J. SANDERSON
PHILIP M. STEGMAIER
NICHOLAS STEPHAN
HARRY H. SAMPSON
COLOMBO J. TASSINARI
GEORGE S. THOM
CHANNING H. WINSOR

DANCING AND RECEPTION

HENRY W. BARNES, *Chairman*
JOHN ARMSTRONG
CHARLES B. BEYTES
JOHN D. BREWER
THOMAS F. CAVANAUGH
A. LESLIE CHRISTIE
CAPT. CHAS. C. DOTEN
CHARLES J. GRANDI
DANIEL A. JOHNSON
LEWIS MORTON
WM. W. MYRICK
JAMES SPOONER
JOHN A. SKAKLE

USHERS AND GUIDES

ROBERT A. BROWN, *Chairman*
JOHN D. BREWER
JOHN A. SKAKLE
WM. W. BREWSTER, 2d
WM. H. COBB
WM. B. CAMERON
FRANK P. DANIELS
WM. C. ELDRIDGE

USHERS AND GUIDES — continued

David Edgar
Jesse L. Gould
Francis C. Holmes
Daniel J. McLean
George L. Phillips
Robert Thom
Henry L. Stegmaier
Richard B. Brown
John A. Beever
Thomas Swan
Charles J. Stegmaier
Harvey A. Soule
T. Allen Bagnell
Ahira B. Kelley
Milo C. Dodge
Daniel M. Bosworth
Alfred L. Barnes
Frank C. Kelley

Miss Bess L. Allen
Miss Annie M. C. Anderson
Miss Susan M. Barrows
Miss Masel H. Beytes
Miss Bessie W. Davis
Miss Mary L. Dunbar
Mrs. George Gould
Miss Helen C. Hathaway
Miss Alice E. Higgins
Miss Elizabeth P. Holmes
Miss Rose W. Howland
Miss Ava W. Phinney
Miss Mabel F. Read
Miss Marion W. Beytes
Miss Maud B. Colcord
Miss Mary E. Goddard
Miss Florence Holbrook
Miss Bessie R. Holmes
Mrs. Mary E. Moore
Miss Ella M. Urquhart
Miss Allena E. Ward
Miss Harriet S. Warren
Miss Christine K. Rudolph

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF GIDEON FRANCIS HOLMES

1843 TO 1909

Presented by PRESIDENT LORING *of the Plymouth Cordage Company at the Celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of Mr. Holmes' connection with the Company, March 27, 1909.*

PORTRAIT OF GIDEON F. HOLMES
(Reproduced from Oil Painting by Gaugengigl)

GIDEON FRANCIS HOLMES

GIDEON FRANCIS HOLMES was born December 21, 1843, in the old gambrel roofed house just back of where Mr. McLean lives, about a quarter of a mile southeast of the Cordage Works. He was the ninth child in a family of thirteen. His father was David C. Holmes and his mother Louisa Savery, both of old Puritan stock. In the direct male line Gideon was descended in the seventh generation from John Holmes, origin unknown, who was living in Plymouth in 1632, and in 1634 was messenger of the General Court. In the eighth generation he is descended from Richard Warren, merchant, who came over in the "Mayflower" in 1620, and Elizabeth Jouatt Marsh who came in the "Ann" in 1623. Richard's brother John came to Salem with Winthrop in the "Arbella" in 1630 — and the family appears to have been of some consequence in England. Gideon is also descended in the seventh generation from Edward Doten or Doty

who came in the "Mayflower" in 1620, and Faith Clark who came in the "Francis" in 1634. Also in the eighth generation from Francis Cooke, who came in the "Mayflower," and Esther who came in the "Ann."

Gideon's father, David, worked for the Plymouth Cordage Company hackling hemp, and with the aid of his children, conducted the farm on which he lived. Even after his retirement from active duties he was for years called upon to superintend the Company's annual stock taking. Before his marriage he had gone to sea with his father, who was a sea captain, fishing on the Grand Banks in summer, and in winter trading to the southern ports of the United States and West Indies, bringing back in the spring a cargo of tobacco, molasses, and West India goods.

It does not require a violent stretch of the imagination to say that Gideon inherited his aptitude for trade, and his fondness for the sea and fishing.

Gideon's father was a church member, and a Puritan to the backbone. He kept a horse and wagon which he occasionally let to his neighbors; but the team never was let on Sundays,

except for a funeral or in case of sickness, and then he would take no pay for its use. The horse had, however, the regular Sabbath duty of taking to church as many of the family as the carriage would accommodate. There was no rambling through the woods or orchards on Sunday, and as they lived quite a distance from the church, the family spent the morning in meditation at home, attending divine service and Sunday School in the afternoon. David Holmes was a strict disciplinarian. A bow and arrow made on Sunday and discovered in the hands of one of the children on Monday was promptly thrown in the fire. He was a man of some education and taught an evening school promoted by the Cordage Company.

Some of the conditions of country life half a century ago might be almost considered hardships to-day, but the simple fare and less luxurious surroundings of Mr. Holmes' boyhood, even the attic chamber with its occasional drift of snow of a winter's morning, are looked back upon with a sense of pleasure as great as any which more modern conditions afford to the children of to-day. The generous slice of bread

and molasses was just as appetizing as it is to the farmer boy of the present.

The problem of supplying the family larder was much simpler then than to-day. In the Holmes family, the orchard, the garden, and the henyard, as well as the reliable family cow, furnished each its contribution.

Two or three pigs were killed and salted down each fall, a beef was purchased from the drove, which in those days was driven in the autumn from the summer pastures in the hills of New Hampshire down through the villages of the Cape, until all the beasts were sold.

A kentle of salt cod, and a barrel of salt halibut fins and napes, delicious when soaked out and fried with salt pork, were usually purchased in the fall. In the spring, herring were easily caught in the neighboring brooks and eaten fresh, or salted, dried, and packed in wood ashes for later use. The neighboring bay and its shores yielded lobsters and clams without stint.

Even when quite a child Gideon got up at five o'clock in the morning and worked in the field or garden until school at nine, and again in the evening helped with the chores. When

about twelve years old he began to drive a coal wagon on Saturdays and holidays. Though not strong enough to carry in the coal, he shoveled it, and filled the baskets. His most lively recollection of this work, however, relates to the exciting races he sometimes brought about between his team and the one driven by his father.

When he was five, he nearly ended his career by falling into a pool in the clay pit, at the westerly end of the present mill No. 2, and was only rescued by one of the brick workers as he went down for the third time. When Gideon reached home on this occasion, his mother asking where he had been, he calmly replied, "been in a whimming." His mother, having perceived his bedraggled appearance, accepted his explanation, but thought he had been unfortunate in the choice of a bathing place. She proceeded to disrobe him and administer the scrubbing which his close contact with the sticky clay made necessary.

The boys were accustomed to add to their pocket money by picking berries or doing odd bits of work for the neighbors. When Gideon was eight, he and two of his brothers cut, split,

and put in twenty cords of wood for two of the neighbors.

Gideon's pay when he first went to work for the Cordage Company was three dollars a week, which was drawn by his father, who continued to draw his pay until he was nineteen years old. Although the company made him an extra allowance for shutting the windows of the rope-walk after hours, which he kept for himself, he did not have much chance to get ahead.

When about five years old he was desperately sick with scarlet fever, and as a youth he was not strong and suffered a good deal from headaches, and was considered too delicate to take up a trade as his brothers did, when they were old enough to be bound out as apprentices. It was generally considered that he did not have as good a chance as they had, when he went into the Cordage Company's office; but not every one was of the same opinion. George Adams, of Kingston, who, with his brother Fred carried on the slaughtering business, was considered a very shrewd man. It was said of him that he would start in the morning with a quarter of beef in his wagon, and return at night with a mortgage on some one's farm. He

took a different view of the matter from most people, and stopping his wagon in the road to chat with David Holmes in the autumn after Gideon went to work, said he thought that on the whole Gideon had the best chance of the lot. The opportunity was not so wonderful, as the will and ability to seize it, and work out a remarkable career.

Gideon entered the service of the company on March 28, 1859, being then a handsome but not very large boy of fifteen. He had attended the high school for a year but had not completed his course. He was a good scholar and understood what he had been taught. His first duty was to sweep out the office and do the errands around the works. James Frothingham, who is still on the company's pay roll, was his first boss, and instructed him in his duties. It was also his business to help Mr. Damon in getting the rope to the scales, and in tagging it when weighed. On one occasion, having undertaken to weigh some rope, he was reproved for his presumption in assuming a duty he was not competent to perform. When not otherwise occupied he prepared the strings for the tags by cutting across a bobbin of "tally

yarn," which divided the string wound on it into convenient lengths.

The office force consisted of Bourne Spooner, treasurer and general manager; Amasa Bartlett, bookkeeper; C. S. Damon, invoice and shipping clerk and traveling man; and young Holmes, the office boy.

Business was not very active that year, and young Holmes, who never wasted his time or opportunities, was out in the ropewalk and mill a good deal, helping here and there, and picking up knowledge and experience. This annoyed one of the overseers, and he complained to Mr. Spooner; but the other one took the pains to come into the office and say that Gideon was always welcome, and never in the way in his mill. Indeed, from the first day that he entered the office there was never a time when young Holmes was not ready, willing, and anxious to help any one, no matter what his job might be; and this trait was soon recognized and taken advantage of, so that he had plenty to do.

In 1862 he became invoice clerk and took charge of the shipping. A little later, Mr. Damon having penetrated to the West and

EARLY PORTRAITS OF MR. HOLMES
MR. HOLMES' BIRTHPLACE

brought back a great many orders for small rope, the capacity of the ropewalk was stretched to its utmost in making the many different sizes, which brought additional work on Holmes. In 1866 one of the mills was burned, and Mr. Bartlett falling sick while it was being rebuilt, it naturally fell to Mr. Holmes to make up the pay roll and pay off the masons, although his ability to do so was seriously doubted.

In 1867, Mr. Bartlett having died, young Holmes took full charge of the books, and at the annual stock-taking, crawled over the bales of hemp in the storehouses and counted them. This was anything but light and easy work in the stifling heat of a July day, when the temperature under the low roof frequently ran above one hundred; and he often reached home long after hours, soaked with perspiration and pale with fatigue; but the story was still the same, he was doing his own work, and helping every one else with theirs. How many things he did, and how much he accomplished was not appreciated until he came down with typhoid fever in 1870. Then the books and office work fell behind, and an expert accountant came down from Boston to straighten them out. He was unable to cope

with the work, and Mr. Holmes was called back to the office before he had fairly convalesced, and long before he could prudently resume work.

His duties were so manifold that it added enormously to his work. An employee coming into the office to buy a postage stamp or ask a question would interrupt the casting of an account or addition of a long column of figures. Besides keeping the books he wrote letters, bought supplies, billed the customers, and kept the office. Mr. Spooner never could abide a pencil, and standing in the door of the rope-walk shipping out goods on a cold day, Holmes had to breathe on his pen to melt the ink between every few words he wrote, and sometimes the ink froze before the pen reached the paper. His wife crocheted gloves without ends to the fingers, that his hands might not get too numb to hold his pen. And for all this he was paid at the rate of fourteen hundred dollars a year.

The question never seemed to occur to Mr. Holmes, but Mrs. Holmes with wifely solicitude sometimes wondered if all his varied services were fully appreciated. Meeting Mr. Spooner one day in the road near his house she

asked him what her husband's position really was. It seems the census taker had asked her the same question the day before and she had told him that Mr. Holmes had entered the Company's employ when a boy and no one had thought to dignify his position with a name. Mr. Spooner stopped, looked bewildered, then told a story about "Jim and John," turned and went thoughtfully into the house.

In the early days, while Gideon was still a boy living at home, he helped on the farm in spite of his long hours at the mill. Work began in the mill in the summer at five o'clock, there being a recess for breakfast from seven to seven forty-five, and the boy was often so faint on his way to breakfast, that he dreaded climbing the short but sharp rise of land that led to his father's door. His mother died when he was only eleven years old, and his father married again before Gideon went to work for the company. The brother nearest his own age having gone away Gideon was left without a home chum, and began to have a young man's craving for a home of his own. So on Aug. 14, 1866, he was married to Helen A. Drew. Mrs.

Holmes was a daughter of Abbott Drew, a ship carpenter by trade, but at that time and for many years superintendent of Water Works for the town of Plymouth. To celebrate the occasion he asked for his first vacation of two weeks, and his request was granted, although with some hesitation, and his pay was continued, though at first it was proposed to stop it during his absence.

The young couple tried to find a house near the works, but all those available were too large, and they were too proud to take a tenement of two rooms which was the only one offering, so they boarded in Plymouth for nine months. There was no conveyance to the works; it was a long walk at all times, and a hard walk in winter; especially this winter of 1866, which was memorable for its heavy snows. On one occasion the Plymouth train was stalled for three days near Halifax, and yet Mr. Holmes forced his way home through the driving storm to relieve the anxiety of his young wife. When he arrived his eyebrows were banked with frozen snow, while an enormous icicle covered his chin and chest. Finding his way through the drifting storm by instinct, as can easily be

supposed, he was in an exhausted condition when he reached the door, and could not have gone much farther. This was considered a feat of sufficient importance to be recorded in the local paper.

In May of the next year after his marriage, Mr. Holmes borrowed the money of the Cordage Company and purchased the place on which he still lives. A very old house then stood on the lot, which had been last put in repair in 1826, and did not retain many marks of that distant experience. Still, it was fairly near the works, and it was home. It was necessary to put some new shingles on one side of the roof and a bulkhead door over the cellar entrance. These improvements, although made after May first, impressed the assessors to such a degree that they increased the valuation. In 1868 a daughter was born and in 1869 a son.

It was hard sledding to support the family, gradually put the house in repair and furnish it, pay the interest and something on the principal of the loan, and the premiums on the two thousand dollars of life insurance that Doctor Jones had wisely insisted on his carrying; yet he had confidence in himself and in his future,

and dared to assume burdens which would have swamped a less capable and persistent man.

He got up at four o'clock now, and milked the cow and worked on the place before he went to the factory. There was no drainage for the house, and he dug and built a cesspool and drain with his own hands. His wife remembers how pale yet handsome he looked as he smiled up from the hole in which he was digging. Neither of them knew enough to take something to eat early, and his morning's work was done on an empty stomach. Nor did he do any less work at the factory. His hours were longer than anyone else's, and whoever got into trouble or was in arrear on his job came to him for help and invariably got it. He was so apt to be late for his meals that his wife would stand in the window, and not put the steak, when they had one, or toast on the fire, until she saw him coming down the road. He helped his father, too; on his way home he would lend a hand at putting up the hay or getting in a belated crop. In fact, he gave himself in the full measure of strength to others, without thought for himself.

A GROUP OF LABOR DAY SHOW PICTURES

He brought home his weekly pay in large sheets of currency, which he put in the bottom drawer of the bureau, and off which his wife cut the bills as she needed them for the daily expenses. She was a careful manager, a good housekeeper, and made a happy home for him. It is true that after her baby was born she was not well, and she still remembers the night before Thanksgiving when Gideon came home to find her ailing, and the baby sick so that she was unable to put it down. The fire was nearly out and there was no supper; but Gideon soon had everything moving along brightly, and after supper was over, and the baby soothed and in bed, he cleaned and prepared the turkey for the next day's dinner.

No doubt he worked too hard and in 1870 he came down with typhoid fever. He tried to get up in the morning to milk the cow but could not leave his bed. So Mrs. Holmes made her first trial at milking, under directions, and succeeded in getting half the usual quantity, which was not bad for a beginner. As he had stuck to his work too long, so he began it again too soon, and it is a wonder that he came through so well, but his indomitable spirit supported him.

There was a row of ancient apple trees along the wall, so old and neglected that they bore no fruit. Mr. Holmes employed the local orchardist to prune these, and the second year they blossomed and bore promise of fruit on the south side, where they somewhat overhung the fence. Anyone who knows Mr. Holmes' fondness for fruit in general, and for apples in particular, can easily imagine the interest with which he watched their growth. Every evening he made the circuit of the apple trees. At last, when the apples were red and plump and nearly ready for picking, a wagon full of empty barrels was driven into the pasture, and a man, assisted by two boys, proceeded to beat the apples from the trees with long poles, in sight of Mrs. Holmes, who was ill and could not interfere, and drove away before Mr. Holmes came home to dinner. He said he was glad he had not been there, as he was afraid he might have said or done something he might regret. However, he went to the neighbor, who disclaimed having directed the raid, but said, nevertheless, that the action was within his legal rights, as the trees overhung his pasture. As he was supposed to be a person learned in the law, Mr. Holmes accepted

his exposition of the case, and swallowed his disappointment. The case was all the harder, as the pasture was used for sheep, and Mr. Holmes had been more than attentive in returning to their mothers the lambs which crawled through the fence. There is no truer saying than that "It makes all the difference whose ox is gored." Somewhat later the neighbor was subjected to similar treatment by one of his other neighbors, sued him for trespass, and recovered damages, distinctly establishing that the law as he had stated it to Mr. Holmes was wrong, and that the apples had been wrongfully picked.

Though chronologically out of place, I mention here another incident which illustrates Mr. Holmes' evenness of temper and ability to see the other point of view. In 1895 he went to Nassau on a short trip. There he heard a good deal about the vexatious strictness of the Collector of Customs at Miami, and therefore watched with some interest that officer examine the luggage which belonged to him and other returning tourists, which he did in a thorough manner. Later in the day, meeting him at a hotel, he accosted him and asked if he was the

collector, to which question the man answered rather gruffly that he was. "Well, then," said Mr. Holmes, "they talk about you a good deal in Nassau, but I want to say that I watched you carefully, and I do not see how the collector of this port could do his duty, and do less than you did." The collector stood astonished for a minute, then grasping his hand said, "Sir, you are the only man that ever spoke to me like that. Anything that the collector of the port of Miami can ever do for you will be gladly done."

The next year after the apple episode the sheep were removed from the neighbor's pasture and it came up a sea of red clover. A swarm of bees from his father's place lit in Mr. Holmes' orchard, and with his father's consent he hived them. In less than two weeks they had filled the boxes with honey from the neighbor's clover. Truly a sweet reprisal for the plundered apples.

For eight years the young couple lived in the old house, and then, before it was quite paid for it got beyond repair, and although it was like parting from an old friend, they tore it down and built the house in which they now live.

One of Mr. Holmes' brothers did the carpenter work, another the mason work and

plastering, and a third the plumbing. There was no painter in the family. The house was not only well built, but at that time was the most modern and convenient house in town. There were many calls on Mr. Holmes for assistance. He had taken one of his relatives to live with him, and not seldom aided less fortunate members of the family. Still he managed to get ahead slowly, although it was eleven years more before the house was fully furnished.

Mr. Holmes gave early evidence of his trading instinct. There was a piece of land lying between the ropewalk and the sea, belonging to one Jackson, which Mr. Spooner was anxious to buy; but he had offended Jackson, who used the land to get seaweed to bank up his house, by telling him that the reason he wanted the land was so that he should not be going there — so negotiations had come to an end. When Jackson wanted money he was in the habit of selling a piece of land, and Holmes noticed that he was around on days when Mr. Spooner was not there, and therefore concluded that he was in need of money, and took pains to find out how much he needed. The amount was more than that lot was worth, but he owned other lands

which adjoined the land of the company, so on a spring day of 1872, when Mr. Spooner was in Boston, Jackson dropped into the office, and began to talk about the weather and farming, and they soon began to talk trade. It was Jackson's object to get the money he wanted for the land below the ropewalk. It was Holmes' object to get all the land he could, and his money's worth; after a long trade, it ended in Jackson's getting the amount of money he wanted, but the company's getting three lots of land. After he had made the bargain, young Holmes had many qualms for fear that he had gone too far in buying three lots instead of one, so Mr. Spooner's warm approval on his return from Boston came as a great relief.

Mr. Charles Spooner was not a well man, and on one or two occasions when he had been absent the directors had given others in the office authority to sign drafts and checks. In March, 1875, the same year in which Mr. Holmes built his new house, Mr. Spooner was given six months' leave of absence, and the directors voted to give "Gideon F. Holmes power to sign checks," and "to do generally such things as the treasurer and superintendent

NUMBER THREE MILL

might do if he were present." In October of the same year the treasurer was given eight months' leave of absence, and Mr. Holmes again acted for him with full powers. He seems to have acquitted himself well of the responsibility, and the company paid its usual dividend of twenty per cent, which was increased in 1877 to thirty-five per cent.

In September, 1880, the directors again put Mr. Holmes in full charge of the company, and on February 3, 1882, Mr. Spooner, the treasurer, having informed the board that he was too sick to perform the duties of his office, it was voted that Mr. Gideon F. Holmes have full power during the sickness of the treasurer to perform the duties of his office. On Februray 14, of the same year, the directors made an allowance to Mr. Holmes of one thousand dollars for past services, and placed his salary at four thousand dollars.

On March 11, the board passed resolutions on the death of Mr. Spooner, and appointed Mr. Holmes to perform the duties of treasurer until a new one should be elected. On September 12, 1882, he was duly elected treasurer at the annual meeting of the stockholders, which

office he still fills. From that day to this, his biography has been largely the history of the company, so completely has he devoted himself to its work.

The sales for 1883, the first year that Mr. Holmes had full charge, amounted to nearly ten million five hundred thousand pounds, nearly two million pounds less than they had been in the preceding year; largely due to the fact that the sales to the Samuel Cupples Company of St. Louis were very much smaller than they had been previously. For some years before this, these parties had absorbed about forty per cent of the company's output; but they did this at very low prices, and insisted on large allowances, which ran as high as one hundred thousand dollars in a year. For some time Mr. Holmes had felt that there was little or no profit in the business received from them, and had often so expressed himself to Mr. Spooner, so on assuming management he insisted on a fair profit, and the Cupples Company went elsewhere for their goods. Although the sales in this year were less, the profits were more, and in a short time other channels were found, so the trade of the Cupples Company was not missed.

Mr. Holmes was put in charge, with considerable hesitation, by the directors, who also controlled the stock. They well knew his faithfulness, zeal, and qualifications as a manufacturer; but they had no idea of his pre-eminent ability as a merchant, and it was on this point that they hesitated. If inherited tendency could be depended on, there was sufficient in his family history to reassure them. But the situation was peculiar. Charles Spooner had been an East India merchant and had lived in China and traveled much. Bourne Spooner was also a trained and experienced merchant, and man of affairs, who had seen a good deal of other parts of the world. The company's raw material came from Russia, the East Indies, and other remote countries, and the selling of the product was not the least important part of the treasurer's duty. Certainly a merchant was needed. Mr. Holmes had achieved his triumphs and gained his experience almost entirely in his native town, and there were grave doubts whether his training was broad enough for the requirements of the business. Then there was a feeling that no one but a Spooner could manage the company, and so some of the stockholders sold their stock.

It is fair to say that the same thing happened when Charles Spooner succeeded his father.

Mr. Holmes was scarcely in office before he began to ask for more machinery, and the directors honored his call, although the policy of increasing the plant was a debatable one at that time. Since 1878 the cordage manufacturers had been united in a pool, by the rules of which a certain percentage of the total business was allotted to each company. If a company made more than its allotment, it paid a profit on the excess into the pool, which was distributed among those who made less than their allotted share. Some manufacturers found it profitable to close their factories and draw their profits from the pool. There was no risk in pursuing that course; but such was not the policy advocated by Mr. Holmes and pursued by the directors of the Plymouth Cordage Company. They took every means to extend the company's business, even at the expense of less profit in the present; and at every renewal of the pool, Plymouth got a larger percentage, and when the system was finally abandoned, had largely increased its market and reputation.

The formation and management of these

pools, and the awarding of the percentages led to much friction; and such votes as this appear on the directors' records: "In the opinion of the directors the experience of the last nine months proves that the present combination works great injustice to this company and we therefore demand that our percentage should be increased"; but here Mr. Holmes' tact and straightforward diplomacy was conspicuous in smoothing out difficulties and eliminating friction, and his good-natured tenacity won him many victories. As one of his competitors said, "Holmes is always putting out his foot for business — and once he gets it in he never withdraws."

January 3, 1885, the company met with a disastrous fire. On the fifth the directors authorized the treasurer to roof in the building, which had been used as a machine shop before the fire, and to use any of the other buildings he saw fit for that purpose. They also authorized him to have one hundred spinners made outside. On February 19, 1885, Mr. E. D. Leavitt and Mr. Stephen Greene, engineers, were requested to report on the best disposition of the buildings, boilers, and engines, taking into consideration

all questions bearing on future growth and economical working; and the treasurer (Mr. Holmes) was requested to estimate and report on the machinery. On March 19, 1885, both reports were adopted, and the beginning of the new Plymouth Cordage Company was made. The remaining old mills, excepting only the rope-walk, were so inferior to the new, that they also were torn down and rebuilt; so that the plant, as it exists to-day, has grown up and developed under the guidance and administration of Mr. Holmes.

The rebuilding and extension of the plant at Plymouth are not the only triumphs of his administration in this direction, since in 1905 was begun the very complete and fine plant at Welland, Ontario, which has successfully extended the activity and traditions of Plymouth to Canada.

When Mr. Holmes entered the employment of the company in 1859, the directors were Bourne Spooner, John Russell, John A. Dodd, Levi H. Marsh, and Benjamin S. Rotch. Caleb W. Loring was clerk. The annual output of the company was 3,750,000 pounds, and there were one hundred and eighteen hands employed on

an average; the pay roll, including all salaries, amounted to $39,450, and the business did not extend west of Buffalo.

When he became treasurer in 1882, the directors were John A. Dodd, president, Caleb W. Loring, George G. Crocker, Schuyler S. Bartlett, and L. A. Plummer. The output amounted to 12,000,000 pounds a year. There were three hundred and three hands employed; the pay roll amounted to $131,473.66, and the business extended generally west to the Mississippi.

Now the directors are Augustus P. Loring, president, George G. Crocker, Schuyler S. Bartlett, William L. Putnam, and B. Preston Clark. The yearly business is 90,700,000 pounds. There are 1,625 hands employed, the pay roll is $764,500, and the business covers all parts of North America, extends as far east as Turkey, and covers many parts of South America and Africa.

To produce the present output, in the way it was produced in 1859, would require 2,850 hands, or in the way it was produced in 1882, would require 2,270 hands.

Although the company was temporarily disabled by the fire, some of the directors, and es-

pecially Mr. Dodd, were averse to a renewal of the pool, but Mr. Holmes felt strongly that the company would benefit by its renewal. On May 8, the president (Mr. Dodd) and the treasurer (Mr. Holmes) were authorized to attend a meeting in New York and assent to a new pool. In spite of the difficulties of the situation, it being obvious that the Plymouth Company was out of the field as a producer, at least for a considerable time, and Mr. Dodd opposing, yet Mr. Holmes, by rare tact and superior diplomacy, succeeded in having the pool renewed, which enabled the company to draw a profit, and pay a dividend during the period of rebuilding, which would otherwise have been a dry season. In July the directors voted that the company should not remain in the pool unless the stock on hand of all the companies on July 1 was turned in. Such an ultimatum communicated to the other members of the pool would have ended, in all probability, what had been so laboriously brought together. A few days later they reconsidered and voted that it was inexpedient to remain in the pool, but gave the treasurer full powers to deal with the situation — which he did to the satisfaction of all con-

ENTRANCE TO GROUNDS
OFFICE OF PLYMOUTH CORDAGE CO.

cerned, and as a matter of fact, the goods on hand were turned in.

In 1887 the pool broke up and a combination of all the large cordage companies in the United States was planned in New York; and in 1889, a combination of about seventy per cent of the spindles in the country was formed, into which every means was resorted to in order to force the Plymouth Company to join. Ruinous competition was threatened and tried, and in 1892, a large interest in the Plymouth stock was acquired. Officers and employees alike were assailed with bribes and threats, and a few of the employees left Plymouth and took employment with the Trust; but Mr. Holmes, who was now recognized as one of the most important men in the industry, declined every inducement (though after he had declined a large salary and bonus, he was asked to name his own figure), and remained steadfast in his allegiance to the company and the men. He knew that he could get suddenly rich if he sold himself and the company to the New Yorkers, but he did not care for wealth at that price. So he stood shoulder to shoulder with the directors and carried through the fight to the end — which

was victory. In spite of his uncomplying position he retained not only the good opinion, but also the friendship of the men he fought, and came to be recognized as the ablest cordage manufacturer of the country.

From the day of its organization to this day, it has been the policy and pride of the Plymouth Cordage Company to make the best rope that can be made, and never to adulterate or debase its product. This tradition has been carried forward and fostered by Mr. Holmes with the great power which he possesses to accomplish whatever he undertakes. He is too honest to make a dishonest rope. Thus Plymouth rope has acquired a well merited reputation in the trade, and being pretty nearly a standard, finds a ready and steady sale at all times.

It was the lack of the Plymouth Company and its prestige and methods that led as much as anything else to the downfall of the combination in 1893.

Having failed in controlling the manufacture and sale of the finished product, the New York parties got up a combination to control the purchase of the raw material acting through the National Company as agent, and Mr. Holmes,

representing his own company, became one of the committee to purchase fiber. It was not long before Plymouth experienced difficulty in getting its raw material. In October, 1890, matters came to a head, and Mr. Holmes, with the authority of the directors, went into the open market to purchase fiber. There was a large lot of manila in New York which belonged to the Plymouth Company, but which was still in the hands of the National Company. This was sorely needed at Plymouth to keep the mills running; but the only way to get it seemed to be by a replevin suit. Arrangements were made with a Boston banking firm to have their New York correspondents go as sureties on the replevin bond, and Mr. Holmes went to New York to get the hemp. On arrival he found that the hemp had been put on a lighter in the harbor. It appeared that the New York member of the Boston banking firm had incautiously asked the National people if they had any objection to his going on the bond, and the hint was sufficient, the lighter and the hemp disappeared.

Mr. Holmes and his counsel, Mr. Cadwallader, took the bull by the horns, and at once called on the National people. They repre-

sented the case so strongly, that the lighter was forthcoming. This episode did not end here. The Boston bankers were a good deal chagrined by the action of their New York correspondent, and assured Mr. Holmes that they were at his service, if there was ever a time when they could do anything for him, to repair their error. In 1893 came the panic, and in the week when it was at its height, when money was eighteen per cent, and could not be got even at that rate, the Plymouth Cordage Company had notes falling due which must be paid, to the amount of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. There was due to the company one million four hundred thousand dollars, not one cent of which could then be collected, although in the end all was paid. In this pinch Mr. Holmes went to the bankers, who remembered their promise without being reminded, and sold sixty-day bills to the amount of fifteen thousand pounds to the company, which was equivalent to procuring a foreign loan at six per cent. There is no doubt that the high personal regard which they had for Mr. Holmes was an important factor in the result. Some of the directors pledged their credit, and with hard work on the part of the

officers, the company came through the storm with flying colors. Undoubtedly too large credits had been given to certain parties, but the lesson was a sharp one, and none of the officials concerned are likely to repeat the mistake.

Mr. Holmes was among the first manufacturers to realize the coming importance of the binder twine business, and he began its manufacture in the first year of his treasurership. This twine, which is much like the ordinary rope yarn, is used in the reaping machines to bind the sheaves automatically. When the grain is thrashed the band is cut and thrown aside, never to be used again. The result is an enormous annual consumption of twine, our share last year amounting to fifty-eight million pounds. In 1891 were made the first large contracts with harvesting machine men for handling the company's output in connection with the machine business; one of these contracts was with Lindsay Brothers of Milwaukee, of which Mr. E. J. Lindsay, the managing partner, has become one of Mr. Holmes' warm personal friends. In 1892 it was found necessary to run the mills at night to meet the increasing demand.

The records of the directors of the company

show that they were not slow in appreciating Mr. Holmes' great ability. On September 3, 1895, they voted "That the congratulations of the directors be offered to Mr. Holmes on the surprising success of his management of the company's business during the past year." August 16, 1898, they voted "That in consideration of the severe labor and responsibility of his services during the past year, and in recognition of the very exceptional ability he has displayed, an addition of five thousand dollars be made to the salary of the treasurer." Nobody could call this an empty compliment, and similar votes appear in the records in subsequent years. Indeed, Mr. Holmes has not only held the appreciation and confidence of the directors, but he has won their affectionate personal regard.

Although he was endowed with a good constitution, such hard work and such a strenuous life as Mr. Holmes led necessarily affected his health. In 1899 he had a sharp attack of bronchitis, and in November he was given three months' leave of absence with full pay, and his son, Mr. F. C. Holmes, acted acceptably as assistant treasurer during his absence. He spent the time in Bermuda; but he began too

BASEBALL ON THE CORDAGE FIELD
ENTRANCE NUMBER ONE MILL
AT THE LABOR DAY FAIR

late in life to acquire the vacation habit, and he has taken no long vacation since. He prefers to take his recreation by a day's fishing off the Gurnet in his tidy thirty-foot auxiliary, or to spend a week in the woods fishing with his friend, Mr. Thayer. Hunting goes against his gentle nature. For years he enjoyed an afternoon's drive behind a good horse, but he is always up to time, and now scurries over the road in an automobile. He takes great pleasure in the cultivation of fruit and flowers, and likes a good field of grass as well as a handsome bed of pansies, and he raises both with conspicuous success. He is justly proud of his one charming little grandchild.

The hard path Mr. Holmes had to travel in his early years, while he was working his way up in the company, gave him a clear understanding of the laboring men's position, while his kindly nature and broad mind enlisted his sympathetic regard for them and everything conducing to their welfare, a regard which was, and is, returned by them by a strong spirit of personal loyalty and affection, which effectually prevents friction and misunderstanding. There has been no general strike since he has been treasurer.

He has been solicitous that not only the workmen, but that also the office force, should be well and conveniently housed; and besides more than seventy tenements built during his régime for the mill hands, six handsome and modern cottages have been built on Holmes Terrace for the clerical force. But more than anything else Mr. Holmes has seen to it that the conditions under which the men work, and the wages and hours of labor should be as favorable as possible. It has been his pride that the Plymouth Cordage Company has always been in advance of legislation in shortening the hours of labor. Under Mr. Holmes' recommendation in 1892, the hours of labor were reduced from sixty to fifty-eight a week, at the same pay, and the employees celebrated the occasion by a jollification, and presented him with a silver inkstand to commemorate the event.

It was about this time, and when the National Company was endeavoring to break up the business at Plymouth, that the Knights of Labor were active in organizing the hands there. They agitated an advance in wages, and for the same pay and conditions that the cordage workers had in New York. There was talk of a strike,

and a committee of the Knights employed in the mill waited upon Mr. Holmes. He received them well, and carefully pointed out to them the differences in their favor in the conditions at Plymouth over those which prevailed in New York. He called to the attention of some of the members of the committee, that they themselves having at one time sought work elsewhere, had never been easy until they got back to their old employment. The committee reported what he had said, and the agitation came to an end.

He takes the greatest interest in their concerts and ball games, and they know it. They would miss almost anything less than his familiar face in the corner window of the office when they play ball. Every step in the social betterment work for which the company has acquired such an enviable reputation has been carried out under his immediate direction. In fact, the first step in this direction was taken by Mrs. Holmes, with his consent, when she established, taught, and managed a sloyd school before the company had a library, schools, or baths, and other facilities for the operatives to get something out of life besides hard work.

In December, 1899, the company appropri-

ated five hundred dollars to be distributed as premiums for the best gardens, well kept places, and fruits and vegetables during the next summer, and Mr. Holmes was one of the largest exhibitors at the first Labor Day show held in a room about fourteen by eighteen feet. Nothing gives him greater pleasure than the present show, that fills two enormous tents and draws a crowd of eight or ten thousand visitors.

Mr. Holmes has always shown a deep and helpful affection for his family, and is never happier than when he can gather them around him in the cottages, which he has built for their use at the edge of the harbor.

At sixty-five, he is well, strong, still young and active. He has risen and achieved success without pulling others down. He has won admiration without envy. He has love in full measure, pressed down and overflowing.

THE END